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AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

The November Elections. The most noteworthy results of the thirty state elections in November were the reelection of Governor Cox (Democrat) in Ohio and the apparent election of Senator Alfred E. Smith (Democrat) in New York. Although the statewide prohibition amendment was adopted in Ohio by a majority not far from 15,000, Governor Cox, the candidate of the "wet" interests, defeated ex-Governor Willis (Republican), the "dry" candidate, by about 10,000 majority. Willis' defeat is attributed chiefly to his alleged pro-German utterances before the war. Governor Cox was the only Democratic state officer reelected, the Democratic state auditor holding over for two years more.

In New York on the face of the returns, Senator Smith had a plurality around 12,000. For Governor Whitman's defeat, the following reasons have been advanced: the exceptionally high standing of the Democratic candidate both in point of ability and personal character and popularity, reinforced by the resources and united support of Tammany; the poorly concealed hostility of the "Old Guard" or Barnes-Wadsworth faction, in combination with the "wet" interests who were displeased with the governor's friendliness toward the federal prohibition amendment and his indorsement by the Prohibition party; the widespread feeling that the governor had neglected his official duties and perverted his office in order to promote his prospects for winning the presidential nomination in 1920; and the disaffection of influential agricultural organizations which hitherto have been stanch supporters of the Republican administration. The only other successful Democrat on the state ticket was the candidate for lieutenant governor. The legislature has a Republican majority in both houses, and for the first time two women have been elected to the assembly. Under a recent noteworthy amendment to the New York election laws, a fresh set of election officers went on duty as soon as the polls closed in order to relieve the polling officials who had been on duty all day of the arduous task of counting the ballots and making the returns. The innovation is reported to have worked well, and apparently deserves to be widely copied.

For the first time in New York history, women participated in a general election on a footing of equality with male voters. In New York City nearly half a million women took the trouble to register, and in the state as a whole it is estimated that not far from a million women qualified as voters. Full suffrage for women was adopted in Michigan and in South Dakota. In Oklahoma there was a large majority in favor of full suffrage; but the constitution requires a majority of the total vote cast at the election, and, according to the secretary of state, there has been some uncertainty as to what constituted the total vote, although indications are that the measure has been adopted. Woman suffrage was defeated in Florida, and also in Louisiana by the New Orleans vote, although a majority of the voters outside the city seem to have favored the suffrage amendment.

The attitude of legislative candidates toward the federal prohibition amendment played an important, though not very conspicuous, part in many of the state elections. Although complete data on this point is not at hand, it appears certain that several of the newly elected legislatures will ratify the federal amendment; and it appears safe to include in this forecast California, Colorado, Illinois, Ohio, New York and Vermont. The last state, like Ohio, elected on the same day a "wet" governor and a "dry" legislature. Statewide prohibition amendments were adopted in Florida, Nevada, Ohio, Wyoming, and were defeated in California, Missouri, and in Minnesota by only 756 votes. Although prohibition won in Ohio, the "wets" were successful in carrying a unique constitutional amendment reserving to the people the power to approve or reject an action of the general assembly "*ratifying* any proposed amendment to the constitution of the United States." If the "wets" invoke such a referendum after ratification of the federal prohibition amendment, as seems to be their intention, some interesting questions of constitutional law are likely to be raised.

Nineteen constitutional amendments, submitted by the constitutional convention, were approved by the voters of Massachusetts. Most important among these were the amendments providing for a restricted form of the initiative and referendum, biennial state elections to begin in 1920, and empowering the legislature to enact a compulsory voting law. North Dakota is believed to be the only other state with such a constitutional provision as the last named, but no legislation has been enacted under it.

Despite obstacles rendering it difficult if not impossible for voters absent with the American expeditionary forces in Europe to take ad-

vantage of the absent-voting laws enacted by a large number of states, it appears that a good many thousand soldiers voted in the various cantonments in this country. An investigation of the operation of both civilian and military absent-voting laws in this election might furnish material for an interesting study.

Until ten days before the election, the congressional campaign was extraordinarily dull and lifeless, due in part to popular interest in the war, the liberty loan campaign, the influenza epidemic, and to the absence of any outstanding issue between the two leading parties. In the house elections there was a total of 51 party changes, in which the Republicans gained 38 seats (mainly in the middle-west) and the Democrats 13 (mainly in the east).¹

In the senatorial contests the Democrats lost seats in Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri and New Jersey. In Massachusetts ex-Governor Walsh (Democrat) defeated Senator Weeks, the first time that a Democrat has been elected to the senate from that state since Robert Rantoul was elected in 1850. This Democratic success in New England was offset by the Republican success in Missouri, where Judge S. P. Spencer defeated ex-Governor John W. Folk.

As a result of these changes, the next Congress will comprise in the house 238 Republicans, 193 Democrats, 2 independents, 1 Socialist, and 1 Prohibitionist, giving the Republicans a clear majority of 41; in the senate the party division will be 49 Republicans and 47 Democrats, a Republican majority of 2 replacing the present Democratic majority of 8.

This party overturn is in reality less impressive than might be inferred from the size of the Republican house majority. In no section of the country, unless Ohio and Kansas may be regarded as exceptions,

¹These figures are based upon the "Unofficial List" of members of the 66th Congress, compiled by the clerk of the house, dated November 14. A few seats are likely to be contested.

The Republican gains were distributed as follows: six in Ohio, four in Indiana and Kansas, three in New York, Pennsylvania, Missouri and Nebraska, two in Colorado, and one in California, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Washington and West Virginia. The Democratic gains were made in the following states: five in New York, three in New Jersey, two in Pennsylvania, and one in California, Nevada, and Oklahoma.

The large Democratic gain in New York was partly due to the fusion between Republicans and Democrats in certain New York City districts in order to prevent the election of Socialist candidates.

occurred anything which may fairly be called a Republican landslide, and the Democratic mortality does not appear to be far from the normal expectancy for the party in power in an "off-year" election.

To produce this party change in the control of Congress so many factors contributed in such varying degrees and combinations in different sections as to preclude the confident offering of any simple formula by way of explanation. Insufficient data is at hand to warrant even a very satisfactory tentative appraisal of the various factors. They may be indicated, however, and some suggestion made respecting their possible influence. In the enumeration which follows, the less important factors or those whose influence seems to have been confined to relatively small areas will be noted first.

(1) Resentment at the treatment accorded by the administration to General Leonard Wood, in command at Camp Funston, has been mentioned as not without its influence in Kansas and possibly other states.

(2) Opposition on the part of influential publishers organizations to the enactment of the postal zone law was an inconspicuous factor, but one which, in the opinion of an important official in such organizations, assisted in the defeat of 59 congressmen.

(3) The Socialist party seems to have been a factor of only negative importance. Fear of its possible success had much to do with the fusion of Republicans and Democrats in certain New York City districts. The Socialist congressional candidates in twelve Manhattan districts were all defeated, including Meyer London, the only Socialist in the present Congress, and Morris Hillquit who ran for mayor of New York in 1917. Victor Berger of Milwaukee will be the only Socialist in the 66th Congress.

(4) The Non-Partisan League was undoubtedly a factor of importance in state elections, and apparently also in congressional elections in North Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, Nebraska, and perhaps in other states. In spite of the charges of disloyalty which have been preferred against some of the officials of the league, its influence does not appear to be growing less, at least not in North Dakota, the state of its earliest successes.

(5) Woman suffrage organizations were active in several senatorial contests, but it is difficult to find justification for the claim that the general result of the election is a strong rebuke to the Democratic party for its treatment of the federal suffrage amendment. The opposition of the suffragists seems to have contributed in some measure to the defeat of Senator Weeks (Republican) in Massachusetts and Senator

Saulsbury (Democrat) in Delaware, both of whom had opposed the federal amendment. Suffragist opposition to the reelection of Senators Baird of New Jersey (Republican) and Borah of Idaho (Republican) and to the election of Mr. Moses (Republican) in New Hampshire, whose position was doubtful, apparently caused these candidates to run behind their party tickets. At the same time new senators favorable to the suffrage amendment were elected in South Carolina, Kentucky and New Jersey.

(6) The voting record of congressional candidates for reelection, on the principal preparedness and war measures in the 64th Congress and two such measures in the 65th Congress, figured prominently in many districts, including at least three Iowa districts where unsuccessful efforts were made to defeat the present Republican members of the house on the ground that they had not supported all the war measures. The work of the National Security League deserves mention in this connection. The league circulated widely a chart showing the voting records of members of the house on preparedness and war legislation. On the league's "Roll of Honor," which included the names of those who had voted "right" on all eight test measures, were 47 names, of whom 43 were Republicans and 4 were Democrats; 7 of these were not renominated, 3 were defeated and 37 were elected. Of the 117 candidates who voted "wrong" on from five to eight of the test measures in both Congresses, 24 were not renominated, 79 were elected, of whom 53 came from the South, and 14 were defeated. Of the 20 members of the 65th Congress only, who voted "wrong" on the two measures coming before that Congress, 7 were not renominated, 10 were elected, of whom 5 were from the South, and 3 were defeated.

(7) Resentment at congressional price-fixing for wheat was clearly a factor in Kansas, and probably in other wheat-producing states. This legislation was associated in the public mind with Southern influence in Congress which prevented price-fixing legislation for cotton, and with the operation of the seniority rule in house committee assignments whereby Southern representatives who held more or less pronounced pacifist views were at the head of important committees. Republican gains were mainly in the rural districts of the middle-west.

(8) Taxation is never relished, and the policy of imposing heavy war taxes inevitably incurred opposition. To this was added charges of sectionalism in the revenue measures. The indiscreet declaration of the Southern chairman of the committee on ways and means to the ef-

fect that the North having forced the country into the war should pay the bill, was given wide circulation by the Republican press and leaders, and it probably had something, and in the opinion of the *New York Times* had much, to do with the Democratic defeat. Mention may also be made of the wide dissatisfaction in business circles with the present Congress for its dilatoriness during the last session in preparing the new war revenue act, a circumstance which led one of the most loyal of administration newspapers to characterize Congress as "our one great slacker."

(9) Presidential influence was openly exerted in the congressional primaries and elections to defeat Democratic senators and representatives who had voted against administration measures or who had been more or less outspoken in their criticisms of administrative policies. Apparently in large measure as a result of executive condemnation, ex-Governor Blease of South Carolina, running for the senatorial nomination, and Senators Vardaman of Mississippi and Hardwick of Georgia, and also Representatives McLemore and Slayton of Texas were defeated in the primaries. On the other hand, Representative Huddleston of Alabama won renomination and reelection in spite of executive opposition vigorously expressed. The President likewise actively but unsuccessfully intervened in behalf of Democratic senatorial candidates in Rhode Island, New Jersey, New Mexico and Michigan. In other states senatorial candidates appealed for support on the ground that they were loyal administration men, notably in Illinois and Missouri, and in the absence of any executive disavowal, the public inferred that they were administration candidates. The President indorsed the reelection of Senator Nelson (Republican) from Minnesota, and no Democratic candidate was formally nominated in that state.

The foregoing enumeration is believed to include the principal factors in the campaign until shortly before the election. Taken singly, or even in certain possible combinations, they hardly account for the party overturn either in Congress as a whole or in more than a few states and districts. In the aggregate there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with the record of Congress and with some actions of the administration; but it was widely diffused and generally uncrystallized. The administration had been in the main accorded loyal support by Republican as well as Democratic party leaders, while among the rank and file party lines had become indistinct. Even the President's activity in particular cases in the primaries and elections provoked little more than local

resentment, for the public has come to regard such action as a defensible exercise of the President's functions as a party leader. Such seemed to be the state of the public mind that thousands of more or less dissatisfied voters might have allowed the election to go by default or have voted for Democratic candidates.

But new factors entered during the last few weeks of the campaign. The correspondence with the German government was openly criticized, and as the prospects for peace developed it became more evident that the President could not count on the same degree of united support for the problems of peace and reconstruction as for the conduct of the war. Under these circumstances the President issued a frank appeal for the election of a Democratic Congress, in order to maintain unity of action in the government.

This appeal had the immediate effect of arousing the open antagonism of Republican leaders, dispelled the apathy which had characterized the campaign up to that time, and tended to stiffen party lines and to arouse party zeal and enthusiasm. To some it has seemed the main factor in crystallizing the latent elements of dissatisfaction, and in repelling Republican and independent voters who were hesitating as to the course they should follow. It appears that, at least in some sections, Democratic managers regarded the President's action as a liability rather than an asset.

On the other hand it has been argued that the President's appeal served to prevent a still more serious defeat for his party. Reference was made to similar appeals by Republicans, as in the campaign of 1898 and Lincoln's adage about swapping horses, in the campaign of 1864. As between these conflicting interpretations it is difficult, if not impossible, to make a clear decision. But the sectional distribution of party gains and losses indicates that local rather than general factors were of most importance in the result.

If any single generalization seems justified, the result of the election should be regarded less as a Republican victory than as a rebuke to the Democratic party. It is certain that the Republicans have received no mandate to engage in merely destructive criticism or obstructive tactics toward administration measures, and the party has yet to develop an effective leadership or constructive program of its own for the problems to be faced.

The Republican party will be on probation for the next two years. Its first real opportunity to serve the nation and incidentally itself—

an opportunity which is at once a measure of its duty and responsibility—will present itself in connection with the reform of congressional organization and procedure. By setting aside the seniority rule in committee assignments, by discontinuing useless committees and the spoils incident to the present committee system, by insuring publicity for caucus and committee proceedings, and by substituting an effective budget system for the present lax, wasteful, and uncorrelated methods of handling financial legislation, the party will strengthen itself with the increasingly large body of independent voters. Before attempting to reconstruct the nation, Congress should take up boldly and courageously the task of reconstructing itself.

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Proposed Governmental Changes in Pennsylvania.—The revision of the Philadelphia city charter and of the constitution of Pennsylvania is now being actively discussed. The Committee of Seventy, a local civic organization, has called a general conference on the city charter. A wide participation by leaders in civic life is promised. Public attention is directed towards the desirability of a smaller city council with a single body to supplant the larger bicameral councils that have persisted in Philadelphia despite changes elsewhere.

It is also possible that an extension of the home rule principle may be worked out to give the city greater freedom of action on important local questions. Other features of modern municipal advance will undoubtedly receive consideration, such as the short ballot and authority to make use of excess condemnation in connection with proposed public works. By such condemnations the city government and treasury would expect to share in the increases in property values that go with public improvements. Philadelphia has lost the opportunity to do this in connection with the extensive boulevard plans now under way, but the right would be of value in the proposed Delaware River bridge construction, the location of which has just been recommended to the joint New Jersey-Pennsylvania Bridge Commission. A part of the cost of this structure could be provided for by allowing the city to condemn and acquire large sections of the surrounding real estate at the Philadelphia end of the bridge and to hold or resell this property.

The charter revision movement has received added impetus from the vital question of subway construction and from the unprecedented ex-